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State of Idaho
Federal Lands Interim Committee

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Dear Legislators:

I strongly encourage you to pursue all avenues to transfer control of our public lands to the State of Idaho. I agree with the arguments made by Mr. Chmelik, et. al., but in this letter, I will mention some points which others may not have made.

I am a Land Surveyor, and as such, I have cleared and marked several hundred miles of boundary lines in the forests of Idaho. I have been in the business since 1979, and have seen a marked change over the years. The lands managed by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior have gone from production to decay.

- Perfectly good roads have been destroyed, in the process adding to siltation of the streams.
- A whole generation of harvestable timber has been left to die or burn.
- Thousands of workers are underemployed because of the lack of timber resources.
- Old clearcuts are now regrown, depriving wildlife of the browse that feeds the wild herds.
- Deer and elk numbers are down, resulting in fewer out-of-state hunters funding our Fish and Game Department.
- The forests are continually more inaccessible to the aged or infirm.
- Without the tax revenue, as a result of the timber industry, Idaho is ever more dependent on subsidies from the Federal Government, for its operating budget.

There are several hundred miles of boundary between lands managed by the State, and those managed by the Federal agencies. If the State wishes to harvest its trees, those boundaries must be clearly marked, and roads built to access only those lands. The topography of Idaho is not conducive to roadbuilding in lands that are separated by straight horizontal lines. Combining management of public lands would greatly increase the efficiency of roadbuilding and timber harvesting.

The State bureaucracy may be unwieldy, but not in comparison to Washington. Under State control, decisions on the lands would be made by Idahoans, accountable to other Idahoans. What happens here is our business, not that of Texans, Floridians, and New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention.

James C. Minser, PLS